



Division of State Parks

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REFERENCES:

PURPOSE: *To distinguish areas under the jurisdiction of the Division of State Parks that have unique features and values worthy of special designation and to provide parameters for their long-term management as established through the general management plan development process.*

ORGANIZATION: Division staff will use an established system for the designation of areas which exhibit unique resource qualities within state park units.

PRIOR POLICY: This policy supersedes the prior policy dated 8/31/1998.

PROCEDURES

- I. Designations of Special Areas will be made as follows:
 - A. Natural Area
 - B. Primitive Area
 - C. Cultural Area
- II. Implicit in the designations are a set of specific criteria and management objectives. The designations are defined by the following criteria:
 - A. Natural Features/Scenic Qualities: types and degree of emphasis. (Attachment A)
 - B. Primitive Features: Unique settings with opportunities for solitude and limited or non-existent motorized use. (Attachment B)
 - C. Cultural Features: types and degree of emphasis. (Attachment C)
 - D. Development: Relationship to resource management objectives, degree of development, carrying capacity and impact to the resource.
 - E. Relationship of recreational activities to resource management objectives and emphasis.
 - F. Size: objectives.
 - G. Location: objectives.
 - H. Visitor Services: range of types and desired lack of services.
 - I. Significance: degree of significance.
- III. *Identification of special areas and designation will occur only through the planning process involving development of a general management plan.*

NOTE: Special areas have unique resource characteristics requiring additional protection provided by special designation. A state park unit may or may not have areas of special designation identified and designated within them.

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Original signed by:	3/10/09
SIGNED	
_____	_____
David K. Morrow, Administrator	Effective Date

Original signed by:	3/17/09
SIGNED	
_____	_____
Allen Biaggi, Director	Date

Copy to Regions: _____ *3/18/09* _____

Review Date: _____

Natural Area Criteria

Definition: A natural area designation within any unit administered by the division must be primarily a consequence of outstanding natural features and are intended to promote experiences closely associated with plant or animal communities or geological formations or scenic features of statewide significance. The management emphasis will be on the natural feature(s). The area must deserve special status for increased protection or preservation. A natural area may be identified on the ground with appropriate signs and will be designated in the relevant master plan. The area will be managed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Natural areas will be designated to preserve, protect and portray natural feature(s) or processes of ecological, geological, palentological or other scientific or similar values.
2. Cultural features of historical, archaeological or other significance may exist in the area, but they are of secondary importance in management.
3. Development will be strictly limited to facilities which compliment or help to preserve, protect or portray the natural feature(s) present, provide public access and protect public health. All development will be planned and executed so as not to impair, damage, or detract from the natural values for which the area is designated to preserve and protect. Carrying capacity will be low.
4. Recreational activities will be strictly limited to passive activities. Such activities will not impair, damage, or detract from the natural values. Emphasis will be placed on educational activities.
5. Natural areas should be adequate in size and have appropriate boundaries to; a) completely include the natural feature(s) the designation is intended to preserve and protect; b) provide a buffer/barrier area to protect the natural feature(s) from outside influences or encroachments; c) permit the development to interpretive devices if these can be provided without damage or impairment of the primary purpose of preserving the natural feature(s).
6. Location must be based on inherent qualities and not geographic, demographic or other factors.
7. Visitor services will be strictly limited to interpretation, health protection and safety. Recreational facilities, i.e., primitive camping and picnic facilities, may be provided to facilitate the public's visits to the site. However, since these facilities and activities are secondary to the area's purpose, they should be, located on the perimeter of the area or otherwise be non-obtrusive.
8. Generally, non-outdoor recreational uses will not be permitted.

Primitive Area Criteria

Definition: Primitive area designation will be to protect a unique natural setting in which the opportunity for solitude is the dominant feature. An area of this designation may be contained within any unit administered by the division. Such an area is managed primarily to prevent degradation of natural conditions, opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and special features. Motorized use within a primitive area will be limited or non-existent. Such an area must deserve special status for increased protection or preservation. A primitive area may be identified on the ground with appropriate signs and will be designated in the relevant master plan. It will be managed in accordance with the following criteria.

1. A primitive area is essentially an unmodified natural environment. Outstanding natural or scenic features may be present. However, a sense of solitude is the dominant feature.
2. Cultural features are normally non-existent or at least very unobtrusive.
3. Development will be strictly limited to facilities that compliment and/or preserve the natural features and solitude, provide public access and protect public health. Development will be planned and executed to not impair, damage or detract from the natural values for which the area is designated to preserve and protect. Carrying capacity will normally be relatively low.
4. Recreation will be strictly limited to passive activities appropriate for the protection of the primitive area and its resources. Such activities will not impair, damage or detract from the natural values.
5. A primitive area is an identifiable geographical area with natural boundaries, generally at least 5,000 acres, but may be smaller if the area is a unique entity.
6. Location should be based on a combination of inherent qualities and geographical distribution.
7. Visitor services will be strictly limited to information, protection and safety.
8. Primitive areas will be of statewide or multiple-county rather than local significance. The area will provide recreational opportunities capable of attracting visitation appropriate within the capacity of the resource.
9. Non-recreational uses may be considered, provided they have little or no impact on visitors' experience and area objectives.

Cultural Area Criteria

Definition: Cultural areas within any unit administered by the division are designated to preserve and protect historical and archeological resources. They are intended to provide a direct link for the park visitor with Nevada's past. Such an area can include historical buildings or a group of historical buildings, battlegrounds, town sites, significant sites of native culture, historical trails or routes, arts or other sites associated with a significant person or event. A cultural area may have a variety of complimentary visitor facilities while a historic site will have little or no complementary development. The management emphasis for both types should be on the historical or cultural features. The area must deserve special status for increased protection or preservation. A cultural area may be identified on the ground with appropriate signs and will be designated in the relevant master plan. It will be managed in accordance with the following criteria:

1. Natural features, which maintain the integrity of the site and/or are necessary to enhance the cultural, historical or other significance of the area, will be maintained.
2. The area must contain an identifiable site, artifact and/or structure capable of being interpreted.
3. Development may include interpretation, stabilization, restoration and/or reconstruction of historical or archeological features and should be planned and executed to help the visitor develop a historical and prehistorical perspective. Any additional development will be in a style and design which is supportive to the objectives of interpretation, safety and management.
4. Recreational activities will compliment the cultural values, and will be appropriate for natural surroundings. Emphasis will be placed on passive recreational activities. Recreational activities area secondary to the area's purpose.
5. Cultural areas will be adequate in size to: a) completely include the historical or archeological feature(s) the area is designated to preserve and protect; b) provide sufficient land area to protect the feature(s) from outside influences or encroachments; c) permit the development of interpretive devices of these can be provided without damage or impairment of the primary purpose of preserving the feature(s).
6. Location must be based on inherent qualities and not geographic, demographic or other factors.
7. Appropriate visitor services may be provided. Recreational facilities, i.e. camping and picnic facilities are secondary and should be located on the perimeter of the area or otherwise non-obtrusive.
8. Cultural areas will portray items, sites or places of historical occurrences which played a prominent role in the State's history and which command statewide interest.
9. Non-recreational uses will not be permitted.